

CLAIMS:

1. A load carrying body for a vehicle, comprising:

- (a) a load-bearing base having front and rear ends;
- (b) a transverse member which is movable along the upper surface of the base between a front position and a rear position;
- (c) a reversible winch mounted to the base, the winch lying below the level of the upper surface of the base;
- (d) a floor constituted by a flexible belt which rests on the upper surface of the base, a first end of the belt being connected to the transverse member and a second, opposite end of the belt being connected to the winch so that rotation of the winch in a first direction winds the belt on to the winch, thereby drawing the floor and with it the transverse member towards the rear end of the base, and rotation of the winch in a second, opposite direction pays out the wound belt from the winch;
- (e) a cable having one end connected to the transverse member and the other end connected to the winch so that rotation of the winch in the said second direction winds the cable on to the winch; and
- (f) a guide system which guides the cable along a path such that rotation of the winch in the said second direction causes the cable to draw the transverse member and with it the floor towards the front end of the base, the guide system including a compensating mechanism which varies the path of the cable during rotation of the winch, so as to compensate for a difference between the belt diameter on the winch and the cable diameter on the winch, the difference varying as the belt is wound and unwound.

2. A load carrying body as claimed in claim 1, in which the winch is mounted so as to be pivotable relative to the base about a transverse pivot axis parallel to the winch axis.
3. A load carrying body as claimed in claim 1 or 2, in which the winch comprises a drum around which the belt is wound, one end of the drum constituting a sheave around which the cable is wound.
4. A load carrying body as claimed in claim 3, in which the winch includes a hydraulic motor at the other end of the drum.
5. A load carrying body as claimed in claim 4, in which the hydraulic motor drives the drum via reduction gearing within the drum.
6. A load carrying body as claimed in any of claims 3 to 6, in which the drum rotates about bearings within the drum.
7. A load carrying body as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the belt is releasably connected to the transverse member and to the winch so that the belt can be turned round end-to-end.
8. A load carrying body as claimed in claim 7, in which each end of the belt has a transverse series of holes which receive corresponding projections provided on the transverse member and the winch respectively.
9. A load carrying body as claimed in any preceding claim, including a scraper which bears against the outer surface of the belt as it is wound on and off the winch.

10. A load carrying body as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the compensating mechanism comprises a guide element around which the cable turns along the said path and a piston-and-cylinder device for moving the guide element to vary the said path.

11. A load carrying body as claimed in any preceding claim, in which the base has orifices for injecting fluid under pressure between the floor and the base in order to reduce friction.